Territory of Delhi that most of the shortcomings pointed out in the newspapers are the result of breaches in the boundary wall. The Sanctuary area was earlier Gaon Sabha land and was put to unrestricted use. The Construction of the wall around the land has resulted in curtailment of these privileges, which has led to breaches in the wall. Considering the adverse edaphic factors, the survival percentage of the plantations is however considered satisfactory. The shortcoming pointed out are being attended to.

Dumping of Untreated Industrial effluents into Rivers

2725. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that industries in and around Kanpiir, Ghaziabad, Meerut Saharanpur and Agra continue to dump untreated effluents -into rivers despite injunctions to the country;

(b) whether such practice have resulted in dangerously polluting the rivers and other water sources; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken or intend to take to effective prevent the dumping of untreated industrial effluents into rivers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government has received information that some industries in the distillery and sugar sectors located in and around Kanpur, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Saharanpur and Agra have not set up satisfactory effluent treatment facilities.

(b) The river pollution is mainly caused by the untreated sewage. However, industrial effluents also deteriorate the river water quality. Three polluted river stretches have been identified in the Ganga basin in Uttar Pradesh.

(c) Steps taken by the Government to prevent the dumping of untreated industrial effluents into rivers include:

(i) Industries have been asked to comply with consent requirements of the U.P. Polution Control Board to keep the discharge of effluent within the stipulated limits;

(ii) A scheme has been initiated to give assistance to clusters of small scale industrial units for setting up Common Effluent Treatment Plants; -

(iii) A time bound action plan for control of pollution in highly polluting 17 categories of industries has been prepared in consultation with State Governments;

(iv) Government had launched the Ganga Action Plan in 1985 and the Yamuna Action Plan in 1993 to clean the polluted stretches of the rivers Ganga & Yamuna.

Smuggling of Animal Skin and Bones

2726. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large quantity of tiger skin, bones of tigers/leopard and other endangered animals is smuggled to foreign countries;

(b) whether Government have made any enquiry to ascertain the source of collection of these goods if so, what is the outcome thereof;

(c) whether any official of the forest department is also involved therein; and

(d) what steps are proposed to be taken to ensure the protection of wild animals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) The Government have received reports about the attempts to smuggle wildlife products out of the country.

(b) In recent seizure of wildlife products in Delhi on 30.8.93, two persons have been arrested and a complaint has been filed in the Court of Law.

(c) The Government have not received any information regarding involvement of

any official of Forest Department in the recent seizure of wildlife products in Delhi.

(d) The steps taken by the Government to protect the wild life and its habitat include:

(1) Hunting of Scheduled wild animals has been banned by law

(2) Central assitance is provided to State/UT Governments for strengthening anti-poaching infrastructure.

(3) A network of wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks have been set up for conservation of wild flora and fauna. Financial assistance is provided by the Central Govt, for development of National Parks and Sanctuaries on request from the State Governments.

(4) Special schemes for protection and conservation of tigers, elephants and rhinos have been implemented.

(5) Raids are carried out by the Wildlife Authorities whenever information of illegal trading in wild animals reaches them.

(6) Cooperation of Police, BSF, Coast Guard and Army is also taken in apprehending the poachers and illegal traders.

(7) International trade in endangered species of animals and articles made thereof, is regulated under the provisions of the Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). India is a signatory to the convention.

(8) Regional and sub-regional offices of Wildlife Preservation are set up mostly at the main export centres of the country to prevent smuggling of wildlife products.

(9) There is a scheme for payment of reward to the informers which, among other things, helps in getting intelligence regarding smuggling of wildlife products.

Opening of New Regional Passport Offices in important cities

2734. SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a demand to open new Regional Passport Offices in more places in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether it is also a fact that there are also demands to open more Regional Passport Offices in other important cities in the country;

(c) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to set-up these new Offices;

(d) what steps are being taken to streamline the issue of New Passports;

(e) what is the present average waiting period for issue of New Passports: and

(f) what steps are being taken to reduce the waiting period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) to (f) Requests have been received from time to time for opening more Passport Offices in various states including Tamil Nadu. The opening of new Passport Offices is based on various parameters including workload and resources available. The opening of new Passport Offices docs not in itself improve the service until the necessary infrastructure and personnel are available. The Government is, therefore, concentrating on clearing the backlog of pending application and on streamlining the process of issue of passports.

The time taken to issue a passport varies from one office to another depending On various factors including the workload. Government have taken a number of steps including augmentation of staff strength, increased supply of passport booklets, introduction of an incentive scheme, upgradation of office facilities and a review of systems and procedures in order to increase productivity and reduce delays.